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Author(s)	Kobayashi, Sayuri
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Development of Education in the Own Language and Culture in the Netherlands

— An Analysis of the Dutch Answer to the Internationalization within and without —*

Sayuri KOBAYASHI**

オランダはE E Cの結成メンバーであり、第二次世界大戦後一貫して、ヨーロッパ統合の推進者としての立場をとり続けてきた。また国内でも、1960年代に地中海沿岸諸国からの移民労働者の大量流入を機に、オランダ以外の言語文化を持つ人口が年々増加しており、国の内と外から社会の国際化が同時進行している。そのオランダで一移民労働者グループが、自らの子女を対象に始め、その後学校教育に組み入れられた教育の一分野が、「自言語・自文化教育 (O E T C)」であり、その役割と目的は、オランダの国の内外で進む国際化の影響を如実に反映し、大きな変化を遂げてきた。

本論はこの「自言語・自文化教育」の目的の変遷に注目し、これをその社会的コンテクストにおいて分析、考察し、オランダの言語文化を持つ集団とそれ以外の集団、その両者に対するオランダの教育政策の変化と、オランダ社会を取り巻く二つの国際化との相互関係を検討すると同時に、現在多くの国々が共通して抱える国際化の問題に対して、新しい視点を提供することを目指すものである。

1 Introduction

‘Education in the own language and culture (OETC¹)’ is a Dutch term given to what is usually called ‘ethnic minority language education’ elsewhere. It

*オランダの「自言語・自文化教育」の変遷 — 内と外から進む国際化へのオランダの取り組み — (小林早百合)

**言語文化研究科博士後期課程

¹ *onderwijs in eigen taal en cultuur*.

began in 1967 at the initiative of some migrant workers to teach their children their native language and culture. In 1974 the Ministry of Education and Science incorporated the OETC in the Dutch education system, and the official OETC in the Netherlands began.

Today, due to the budgetary restrictions, children of the migrant workers and the immigrants from the eight countries and one area²⁾ are entitled to the official OETC in primary and secondary education. The number of official OETC participants in primary education has reached 60,961 in 1990, making up 67% of the total target group³⁾.

Within its short history, the expected functions of the OETC have gone through major changes, reflecting the changes of the Dutch national education policy towards its indigenous as well as non-indigenous populations. The developments within and without the national borders of the Netherlands since World War II, namely the growing presence of the non-indigenous population and the orientation towards European integration, have made some policies unsustainable and some others undesirable. This paper is an attempt to discuss how the education policy of the Netherlands and the international orientation of the Dutch society are interrelated, by following the development of the OETC in its social context, and to learn the nature and the depth of the Dutch commitment to internationalization; one of the common themes the Netherlands has to share with the rest of the world today.

2 The beginning of the OETC in the Netherlands

Despite its renowned policy of tolerance towards political and religious refugees since the early days, the Netherlands has long been an export country of migrants. It was in the 1960's when the migration balance finally turned positive with the influx of the migrant workers from the Mediterranean countries. The basic assumption the Dutch government had, in common with other industri-

²Cape Verde, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and former Yugoslavia.

³Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen (1991), p.6.

alized West European countries, in introducing these migrant workers to its national labour market was that they would only be temporary residents and would return home as soon as they finish their job, for which reason they were called 'gastarbeiders (guest workers)'.

The 'guest status' was applied to their children, too, when they started to attend Dutch schools, which seemed to bother no parties involved, except the children themselves. They could barely follow the class, for the language of instruction in regular education was the language of the indigenous majority population, Dutch⁴), and not the language those children spoke at home.

Yet neither the Dutch government nor their parents, both of whom believed in the temporary nature of their stay in the Netherlands, saw it as a problem. While the national policy towards the migrant workers and their families ran 'participation in the Dutch society with preservation of own culture', the content and the significance of its first half never came under serious examination; migrant workers comprised less than 2% of the total Dutch working population during the 1960's⁵) and family reunions in the Netherlands were still rare phenomena.

Having remigration in prospect, those migrant workers who did have their children with them in the Netherlands were concerned about 'preservation of own culture', the latter half of the Dutch government's catchword. The OETC, which the Spaniards started on a modest scale on private initiative in 1967, soon made its way into other groups of migrant workers. This 'grass-roots' OETC came under recognition of the embassies of the countries of origin and the Dutch Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs, as a means to help facilitate remigration and reintegration of the children of the migrant workers.

⁴Although there exists an indigenous minority language called Frisian in the Netherlands, its speakers are thoroughly bilingual today.

⁵Amersfoort (1982), p.184.

3 1970's : The way into the Dutch education system

During the 1970's the number of the non-indigenous population in the Netherlands continued to grow, in spite of the depression which struck the Dutch economy in 1973. The annual rate of increase in absolute numbers was recorded as 50,000⁶⁾, its main contributors shifting from the South European countries to Turkey and Morocco (See Table 1).

Table 1. Number of foreigners by nationality, 1960-1977

Nationality	1960	1965	1970	1975	1977
Greeks	404	3,042	4,038	4,164	4,227
Yugoslavs	5	1,034	7,812	12,873	13,318
Portuguese	1	1,521	4,789	7,813	9,174
Spaniards	309	21,025	25,866	31,312	26,887
Turks	-	8,822	29,325	62,587	82,913
Moroccans	-	4,506	21,040	33,156	47,089
Tunisians	-	-	-	1,215	1,552
Total	719	39,950	92,870	153,120	185,160

Figures taken from Amersfoort (1982), p.192. Table 3.

By the time when the Ministry of Education and Science took the OETC under its responsibilities in 1974, the Dutch government realized that remigration of the migrant workers did not take place at the rate it had initially calculated⁷⁾; a significant part of temporary migrant workers has grown into immigrants during the 1970's.

Accordingly, the Education Ministry acknowledged the presence of two groups of migrant workers in the Netherlands, one that stays and the other that remigrates, and the need to prescribe appropriate education for the children of each type. The prescription itself was an easy task. The Ministry took the old catchword, 'participation in the Dutch society with preservation of own culture', and applied the first part for those who should stay and the latter part for those who should remigrate.

⁶ Commissie Allochotone Leerlingen in het Onderwijs (1992), p.5.

⁷ While about 70% of the migrant workers returned home in the early 1960's, the percentage dropped to 50 - 60% in the latter half and the expected figure for the period between 1971 - 1975 was a little more than 30%. Amersfoort (1982), p.187.

Putting them into practice, however, was another question. It was not possible to distinguish immigrants from migrant workers, for most family reunions and settling down in the Netherlands took place as a consequence of the indecision to return, rather than of the explicit decision to stay. All that the Education Ministry could do was to make both types of education available to every immigrant child by offering him/her both the regular curriculum and the OETC at school.

No special measures were introduced yet in offering the former to the immigrant children. Considering the overwhelmingly minority position of the immigrants in numbers as well as in socio-economic activities in the Netherlands, one way integration of the immigrants to the existing Dutch society seemed to be the due course of 'participation in the Dutch society', including educational institutions. The immigrant children joined the regular class on the first day of their school, and were expected to learn Dutch and to be familiar with dominant Dutch culture, mostly on their own. Extra lessons in Dutch were available but only at the mercy of individual teacher and school, most of whom lacked expertise in teaching Dutch as a second language.

In offering the OETC as a part of education in the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education appropriated maximum of 5 hours per week within or outside the regular school hours. As its aim, 'preservation of one's own culture to facilitate the remigration', remained unchanged, learning the native language and culture continued to be a means of reintegration to the society of origin. Therefore both its content and the manner how it should be taught were not formulated by the Dutch Education Ministry but were left to the OETC instructors, who came from the homeland and were hired by the individual schools.

4 1980's : A decade of controversy

The number of non-Dutch nationals in the Netherlands steadily grew and its percentage to the total population reached 3.4% in 1980; remigration seldom took place, especially among those who came from Turkey and Morocco (See

Table 2). The lasting nature of the presence of the immigrant population in the Netherlands has become definite.

Table 2. Number of foreigners by nationality, 1980-1992

Nationality	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992
(ex-)Yugoslavs	14,000	12,000	13,000	13,000	15,000
Portuguese	9,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	9,000
Spaniards	24,000	21,000	17,000	17,000	17,000
Turks	120,000	156,000	191,000	204,000	215,000
Moroccans	72,000	111,000	148,000	157,000	164,000
Total foreign population	521,000	559,000	642,000	692,000	733,000
Ratio to total Dutch population	3.4%	3.9%	4.3%	4.6%	4.8%

Figures taken from CBS (1993), p.43.

The immigrants in the Netherlands, as in elsewhere in Europe, have settled in the old centers of the cities and industrial areas, creating small enclaves of non-Dutch speaking population there. As a result, concentration of non-Dutch speaking children occurred in a limited number of schools⁸⁾, where teaching regular curriculum in Dutch faced great difficulties and lower school performances among the pupils were reported. By then it was also known that children of the immigrant workers were over-presented in primary and lower vocational education and under-presented in higher education, be it vocational or academic (See Table 3).

The problem was that the growth of immigrant population in the Netherlands did not go hand in hand with the growth of the national economy. Unemployment rate among the immigrant workers, which was 1.8% in 1974, has reached 9.2% in 1979⁹⁾; the depression which started in 1973 hit the immigrants hardest, who were mostly unskilled and unschooled workers in the labour-intensive sectors. Now it was feared that the lower school performances and the succeeding lower academic career would result in the reproduction of

⁸⁾In academic year 1985/'86, 47% of Dutch primary schools had no foreign pupils; in 39% the foreign pupil ratio was between 0 and 10%, while in 1% of Dutch primary schools the ratio was more than 60%. CBS (1987), p.7.

⁹⁾Amersfoort (1982), p.189.

high unemployment among the second generation immigrants. Consensus was on the make in the Dutch government that there needed to be a comprehensive policy which would sever this 'vicious circle'.

Table 3. Foreign pupils/students in education in the Netherlands, 1985-1986
(by nationality, in percentage to the total foreign pupils/students)

Nationality	Primary Education		Secondary Education			Higher Education	
	PE	SE	GSE	JVE	SVE	HVE	UE
W. Germany	2.9	3.6	9.7	4.1	12.5	*23.0	21.8
France	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	*2.2	*2.2
Belgium	1.3	2.0	3.4	1.2	4.4	7.5	*8.0
Spain	3.0	3.9	5.5	3.1	*7.1	4.0	2.6
Portugal	1.7	*2.2	2.0	1.1	1.6	0.1	0.1
Turkey	35.2	31.0	24.2	*40.2	26.0	10.1	4.0
Yugoslavia	*2.5	1.5	2.1	1.0	1.2	0.5	0.7
Morocco	31.7	32.6	15.3	*33.8	12.7	3.2	1.4

Calculations made on the figures taken from CBS (1987), pp.11, 13.

(*mark refers to the type of education a nationality is most presented)

— Abbreviations —

PE:primary education, SE:special education, GSE:general secondary education, JVE:junior vocational education, SVE:senior vocational education, HVE:high vocational education, UE:university education

4.1 The OETC for the cultural minorities in the Netherlands

The Dutch Ministry of Education came up with its first comprehensive education policy plan in 1981¹⁰ for the 'cultural minorities'; a new term introduced to include both the immigrant workers from the Mediterranean countries and the immigrants from former overseas territories of the Netherlands. The underlying idea here was that the immigrants did and should make up a permanent component of the Dutch society. Although the old catchword, 'participation in the Dutch society with preservation of own culture' survived once again in this new policy, 'participation' and 'preservation' were no longer the separate goals of the separate groups of immigrants but one set of goals to be attained by every immigrant.

With the new policy, 'intercultural education' was introduced to be a part

¹⁰ *Beleidsplan Culturele minderheden in het onderwijs.*

of regular school curriculum as a means to foster acculturation of the cultural minorities and the majority¹¹). This indicates that integration, which had been a synonym for one-way assimilation of the minorities to the cultural and social patterns of the majority in the Netherlands, was finally recognized as a two-way interaction process¹²).

Now that remigration not being in prospect of the majority of immigrants, the OETC as a means to facilitate reintegration to the society of their origin could no longer be maintained. The 1981 policy plan prescribed the following two new functions of the OETC while not rejecting the reintegration function altogether:

1. to contribute to the development of the self-concept and the selfconsciousness of its learners; and
2. to maintain contact between its learners and their families and friends, in the Netherlands and in the country of origin, by fostering better understanding of the culture.

Here, the OETC was acknowledged, for the first time in its history, as a means to help prepare the immigrant children for their lives in the Netherlands.

This 'revolution' in the OETC functions necessitated major changes in the OETC practice at school. First of all, the teaching method and materials, which had been based on the education exercised in homeland, should now be developed to reflect the experience world of the OETC learners in the Netherlands. At the same time, the OETC should be taught in connection with other school subjects so as to create a better learning environment for the immigrant children. Improvement of the quality as well as the legal position of the OETC instructors was also indispensable in order to give them a due status and a say in the Dutch education system.

¹¹Driessen (1992), p.9.

¹²At first it was more a theory than a practice; in spite of the general agreement on the value of the intercultural education, very few schools dared to teach it, due largely to the lack of consensus over its interpretation as well as of concrete teaching methods and materials.

In 1983 the functions of the OETC were formulated anew¹³):

1. to help develop a positive self-concept and selfconsciousness;
2. to bridge the gap between the home- and school-environment; and
3. to contribute to the intercultural education.

Within two years, the reintegration function was totally discarded, and the OETC has become a means to help non-Dutch speaking children with non-Dutch cultural background integrate into the Dutch education system.

And the controversy over the functions as well as the legitimacy of the OETC incorporated in the Dutch education system began. The advocates conceded the functions prescribed by the government and claimed that the fact that a part of regular school education was appropriated for the OETC alone contributed to safeguarding the value of minority culture in the Netherlands.

Their opponents refuted that there were yet no concrete figures available to prove the benefit of the OETC. They pointed to the lower school performance among the cultural minority children, who were often the participants of the OETC, and held the OETC responsible for it. They argued that the OETC was usually given at the cost of some regular curriculum during the school hours and that only the OETC participants should miss the regular lessons. They continued that even when the OETC was given after school, it would still be an extra burden, from which Dutch indigenous children were free. Moreover, they added, it was not rare that the children learn the official language in the OETC, and not the vernacular they spoke at home, which amounted to learning a new language.

4.2 The multicultural Netherlands and the OETC

The controversy over the OETC coincided with the period when the redefinition of the Dutch society was under way. Once the immigrant population was recognized as permanent residents in the Netherlands and thus acknowledged

¹³ *Notitie over the Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur.*

as a permanent component of the Dutch society, acknowledgement of their languages and cultures as an element of the national culture of the Netherlands was due.

In the process of redefinition, thorough analysis of the status quo as well as of the history of the Netherlands was essential. Considering the smallness of the land (third smallest among the ten EC member countries in 1984) and the high population density (highest in EC), it seemed quite unlikely that the Netherlands would ever be a land of immigration, where non-indigenous population becomes the majority; that is to say, indigenous Dutch language and culture continues to be the central pillar of the national culture of the Netherlands.

Meanwhile the ongoing international orientation of the Dutch economy would certainly be accelerated when the EC, which had been in inertia since early 1970's, should reactivate its move towards integration and would foster the further movement of not only goods but also people across the national borders. That is to say that the presence of non-indigenous population, temporary or permanent, in the Netherlands would continue to grow.

Examination of the history of the Netherlands, on its part, points to the fact that the presence of non-indigenous population was no recent phenomenon. The Golden Age, in which period the foundations of the modern Dutch language and culture lie, was initiated by the influx of immigrants in the 16th century, many of whom had a cultural background and a native language different from those of the indigenous Dutch population then; the present indigenous Dutch culture and society themselves were the very products of the interactions of diverse cultures, including the ones which originated in the Netherlands.

The fact that the new clause, "the underlying assumption of the education must be that the pupils are growing up in a multicultural society", was included in the Primary Education Act¹⁴, at a time when the foreign population ratio to the total population of the Netherlands was less than 4%, should therefore

¹⁴This act was approved in the Dutch parliament in 1981 and came into effect in 1985.

be interpreted as the acknowledgement of two fundamentals by the Dutch government, namely, the ever-growing international orientation of the Dutch economy and the dynamic nature of the Dutch society and culture.

Upon the enforcement of the Act, equality of cultures became the principle of the Dutch society, which in turn made the term 'cultural minority' self-contradictory. Henceforth the '*allochtonen*¹⁵⁾' and the '*autochtonen*' became the official terms to designate the non-indigenous and the indigenous population, respectively. The multicultural clause legitimated the incorporation of the OETC as a component of the Dutch education, too; the *autochtoon* children have the right and the opportunity to learn their own language and culture at school, and so have the *allochtoon* children.

Yet the adoption of the dynamic definition of the national culture made the learning of own language and culture for the sake of preservation unsustainable; the multicultural Netherlands holds the diversity in the national culture to be a starting point and not a goal. Accordingly, the OETC has become an indispensable means of giving a sound start to the process of interactions among the elements which constitute the diversity. The old catchword, 'participation in the Dutch society with preservation of own culture', which had survived redefining of migrant workers as temporary residents, as immigrants and then as cultural minorities in the past, had no chance of surviving the redefinition of the Dutch national society and culture.

4.3 Further development in the OETC and the multicultural Netherlands

In 1986 a new development was observed in the OETC; Arabic and Turkish, two most popular non-indigenous languages in the Netherlands, made their debut as optional subjects in secondary education¹⁶⁾. The OETC, which was

¹⁵ According to the official definition of the Netherlands, *allochtonen* refers to all people coming from elsewhere, who have settled themselves and their offspring until the third generation (assuming they consider themselves as '*allochtonen*') in the Netherlands.

¹⁶ At first they were offered in junior vocational education, where Arabic- and Turkish-speaking students were over-presented. In 1990 they became optional subjects in the

reserved solely for the non-indigenous children as to teach their native language and culture, became, in principle, a subject open to every Dutch student. It was quite a significant move, for it changed the contents of what 'own language' referred to. 'Own language', which had been a synonym for a native language, something given and to be preserved, would henceforward be any language which is acquired or in the process of acquisition, 'making it one's own'.

The development around the EC in the latter half of the 1980's towards the integration of Europe contributed significantly in considering the non-Dutch speaking population as a part of national resources of the Netherlands. The creation of single European market and 'Europe without borders' would inevitably involve the Dutch economy, which had already been internationally oriented, even deeper in the international activities and would create free movement of people. In order to keep the Netherlands versatile and competitive in multicultural and multilingual Europe, every available national resource needed to be utilized. And one of the few the Netherlands had was the linguistic resource of the existing non-indigenous population.

Turkish- and Arabic-speakers make up 32% and 26% respectively of the total non-Dutch speaking population in the Netherlands¹⁷). In the past the OETC had been organized for the preservation of one's own cultural inheritance and the resulting command of non-Dutch languages was never considered as a national resource. Making two major *allochtoon* languages optional subjects in secondary education would not only guarantee those two languages a certain status in the Dutch society and involve the speakers of those languages actively in the Dutch education system, but would also contribute in making greater contacts with the countries where those languages are spoken¹⁸).

end-examination of pre-vocational and junior general secondary education. By 1995, this measure is extended to every type of secondary education in the Netherlands.

¹⁷ Calculated from the figures available in Ministry of Education and Science (1992a) p.20.

¹⁸ As for the role of foreign language education, including Arabic and Turkish, at school in the Netherlands, details are discussed in Kobayashi (1995).

5 Conclusion : Dutch answer to the internationalization within and without

The development of the OETC has been the reflection of Dutch policy, first towards the non-indigenous population and later also towards the indigenous population in the Netherlands. The immigrants, who were given the guest status upon arrival, grew gradually into 'cultural minorities', who were unilaterally to assimilate to the dominant indigenous society and culture of the Netherlands. They were finally accepted as a part of the Dutch society and culture when the national government acknowledged the two fundamentals, the ever-growing international orientation of the Dutch economy and the dynamic nature of the society and culture of the Netherlands.

When the non-indigenous population was a guest, it was easy to guarantee the opportunity of the OETC, for it existed outside the frame of the national culture and education. It was when they became cultural minorities that the controversy over their right to the OETC began. Here often conflicting two values of national education came into question, namely, to realize equality of cultures and to guarantee equal chance in society. The former strives to help pupils/students develop values, interests and attitudes which are shared in a certain culture and society and the latter aims to prepare them for their socio-economic activities¹⁹⁾.

The fact that the multicultural clause was included in the Primary Education Act tells us that the former value, equality of (sub)cultures has its legal footing secured in the Netherlands. With this inclusion, the right to the education of one's native language and culture was guaranteed, be it of indigenous or non-indigenous nature. The OETC was accepted as a means to give the non-indigenous population an access to their own cultural inheritance. And together with the intercultural education it is to act as a starting point of interaction between the subcultures which exist within the national borders of the Netherlands.

But what about the latter value of the national education? There still re-

¹⁹Procee (1991), p.182.

main the problems concerning the realization of guaranteeing equal chance in society; the lower school performance and the following higher unemployment rate and lower socio-economic status among the *allochtoon* population. It is quite recent that the Dutch government and experts in education acknowledged the competence of Dutch language as one of the keys to the success in Dutch schools and society. The teaching of Dutch language to the *allochtoon* children, the importance of which had been neglected and left to the individual schools and teachers, has finally come under public scrutiny in the latter half of the 1980's. Since 1986 a national project and coordination is organized to improve the teaching of Dutch as a second language and to reduce the rate of functional illiterates in Dutch²⁰).

Very few in the Netherlands today claim, however, the absolute supremacy of one of the two values over the other, such as discarding the OETC altogether and to teach the Dutch language intensively. Instead, in an effort to combine these often incompatible values, several efforts are being made or under way; making Arabic and Turkish optional subjects in secondary education should be interpreted as one of them, and so is the attempt to offer the OETC in a form of bilingual education by using the native language of the pupils/students as the language of instruction in some of the regular school subjects.

In the beginning there was cultural relativism in which each culture existed largely without interaction. Then the period of universalism started and forced the one-way intergration of the minorities to the culture and society of the majority. The Netherlands at present is in the period of relativism again, but not in the same form as the former period. Rather, it should be termed as interactive pluralism, which does not necessarily aims for relativism but takes relativism as a starting point of the national culture in the hope for creating something new. The development of the OETC shows how the Netherlands, one of the original members of the EEC and the unyielding ad-

²⁰In 1985, 7% of the pupils were qualified as functional illiterates at the end of primary education. There are also approximately 350,000 adults in the Netherlands who cannot read or write simple Dutch text. Ministry of Education and Science (1992b), p.33.

vocate of the integration of Europe, has come to prescribe its answer for the internationalization within and without; by taking it in and by making it its own flesh.

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